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Message Text

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43
ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 SCCT-02 SAM-01 SAB-01 AID-20

IGA-02 DRC-01 /158 W
---------- 115174
R 191323Z AUG 74
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6017
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMXASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PFOR, IS JO
SUBJ: GREEK CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP ACCUSED OF AIDING TERRORISTS

1. SUMMARY. GREEK CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP HILARION CAPUCCI WAS ARRESTED BY ISRAELI POLICE AUG 18 ON SUSPICION OF SMUGGLING ARMS AND EXPLOSIVES INTO ISRAEL FROM LEBANON FOR USE BY ARAB TERRORISTS. ACCUSED OF BRINGING ARMS ACROSS ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER HIDDEN IN HIS CAR, HE HAS BEEN REMANDED IN CUSTODY FOR 15 DAYS WHILE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES. APOSTOLIC DELEGATE UNAWARE OF ANY EVIDENCE AGAINST ARCHBISHOP OTHER THAN ARMS FOUND IN CAR. IS AWAITING GOI PERMISSION TO VISIT CAPUCCI AND INSTRUCTIONS FROM VATICAN. END SUMMARY.

2. ISRAELI RADIO, AUG 18 AND PRESS AUG 19 FEATURED ARREST AUG 18 OF HEAD OF GREEK CATHOLIC CHURCH IN JERUSALEM, ARCHBISHOP HILARION CAPUCCI, ON SUSPICION OF ARMS SMUGGLING FOR FATAH. POLICE
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ACCUSE HIM OF TRANSPORTING WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES HIDDEN IN HIS

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CAR ACROSS LEBANESE-ISRAELI BORDER AT ROSH HANIKRA FOR USE BY TERRORISTS. ITEMS FOUND IN RECENT SEARCH OF HIS CAR SAID TO INCLUDE KALACHNIKOV RIFLES, REVOLVERS, HAND GRENADES, EXPLOSIVES AND DETONATORS. COURT REMANDED ARCHBISHOP INN CUSTODY FOR 15 DAYS WHILE INVESTIGATION PROCEEDS.

3. APOSTOLIC DELEGATE IN JERUSALEM, MGSR. WILLIAN A. CAREW, HAS GIVEN US IN CONFIDENCE FOLLOWING ACCOUND OF CASE AS KNOWN TO HIM. ARCHBISHOP RETURED FROM LEBANON ACROSS BORDER AUG 7. HE WAS DETAINED IN JERUSALEM EN ROUTE FROM HOME TO PATRIARCHATE ABOUT 0800 AUG 8 AND HLED FOR QUESTIONING UNTIL 0200 NEXT DAY. ARMS FOUND HIDDEN IN DOORS, ETC. OF CAR AT THAT TIME. (CAR DIMANTLED TO LOCATE CACHE.) ISRAELI AUTHORITIES TOLD ARCHBISHOP AND CAREW AT TIME OF RELEASE THAT THEY CONSIDERED CASE CLOSED. ON AUG 9 CAREW TALKED AT LENGTH WITH ARCHBISOP, WHO SAID ARMS HIDDEN IN CAR WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE OR CONSENT; NOTED CAR HAD BEEN SENT TO GARAGE FOR REPAIR IN BEIRUT. CAREW SAYS HE GAVE ARCHBISHOP STRONG WARNING ABOUT ANY INVOLVEMENT IN SMUGGLING OR RELATED ACTIVITIES BUT SUGGESTED NOT FURTHER ACTION TO VATICAN SINCE POLICE APPARENTLY SATISFIED ARCHBISHOP NOT RESPONSIBLE.

4. CAREW RECEIVED WORD OF ARCHBISHOP'S ARREST AUG 18 FROM NEWSMAN. WHEN HE COMPLAINED TO AUTHORITIES FOR NOT BEING INFORMED BY THEM, THEY APOLOGIZED FOR "SNAFU". CAREW SAYD ONLY ACCUSATION SO FAR IS SAME AS THAT OF AUG 8, I.E. SUSPICION OF SMUGGLING WEAPONS AND EXPLOSIVES. HE NOT AWARE OF ANY ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE TURNED UP IN INVESTIGATION SINCE AUG 8. HE HAS SUBMITTED REQUEST TO VISIT ARCHBISHOP AND TO ARRANGE LEGAL COUNSEL FOR HIM BUT AS OF 1300 AUG 19 HAD NO REPLY FROM GOI. HE IS ALSO AWITING ANY INSTRUCTIONS VATICAN MAY HAVE.

5. ISRAELI SUSPICIONS PRESUMABLY ORIGINALLY AROUNSED LAST APRIL WHEN CAPUCCI REPORTED THEFT OF LARGE AMOUNT OF US CURRENCY FROM HIS HOME. HE LATER REPORTED MONEY WAS RETURNED. HE HAD BEEN RAISING FUNDS FOR RENOVATION OF AN ADDITION OF HOSPICE TO HIS CHURCH, BUT RUMORS AT TIME INDICATED QUESTIONS ABOUT PURPOSE OF LARGE QUANTITY OF CASH KEPT IN HIS HOME.

6. CAPUCCI IS ARAB AND CITIZEN OF SYRIA. HE HAS HELD PRESENT POSITION SINCE 1965. CONTRARY TO SOME NEWS REPORTS, HE DOES NOT
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HAVE DIPLOMATIC STATUS, ALTHOUGH HE ENJOYS CERTAIN PRIVILEGES ACCORDED RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN JERUSALEM AND CARRIES VATICAN SERVICE (OFFICIAL) PASSPORT TO FACILITATE HIS CROSSING BORDERS. HE IS UNDER JURISDICTION OF PATRIARCH MAXIMUS OF LEBANON AND HIS ARCHDIOCESE INCLUDES SOUTHERN ISRAEL AS WELL AS JERUSALEM AND WEST BANK. NORTHERN ISRAEL AND GALILEE ARE UNDER ARCHBISHOP RAYA OF HAIFA. ACCORDING TO CAREW CAPUCCI HAS ONLY ABOUT 3500 CHURCH MEMBERS IN HIS JURISDICTION, WHILE RAYA HAS ABOUT 38,000.

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7. CAREW BELIEVES GOI HAS MADE MISTAKE IN HANDLING CASE AND THAT ASLESS THERE IS IRREFUTABLE PROOF OF ARCHBISOP'S GUILT ISRAEL WILL BE SUBJECT TO CONSIDERABLE CRITICISM ABROAD, ESPEICALLY FROM CATHOLICS. HE SUGGESTED TO ISRAELIS THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE FOR ALL CONCERNED IF THEY HAD INFORMED HIM WITHOUT PUBLICITY. IN SUCH CASE CAREW SAYS HE COULD HAVE HAD ARCHBISHOP TRANSFERRED IMMEDIATELY AND, IF SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION PROVED HIS GUILT, CHURCH WOULD HAVE DISCIPLINED HIM. NOW HE FEARS IF CONVICTION IS BASED ON CONFESSION, SOME WILL INEVITABLY MAKE COMPARISIONS WITH MINDZENTY AND SIMILAR CASES.
HONES

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 AUG 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: papenddr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
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Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740227-0993
From: JERUSALEM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Type: TE
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